بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

All praise is due to Allah, Who has elevated the status of the scholars, and distinguished them from ignorants, and made them the inheritors of the Prophets. May peace and blessings be upon the one who said: "Whomever Allah wants good for, He grants him understanding of the religion" and upon his family and all his companions.

Today, we — both the laymen and the scholars — are afflicted by a dangerous trial: "The Trial of the Ignorants who Feign Knowledge!" Also known as "Brothers". We must begin by defining this disease: "Ta'alum" تعالم refers to claiming knowledge and displaying understanding without possessing real knowledge, ability, or qualification. It's to pretend being knowledgeable about the Religion of Allah while being unqualified. One who does this is called a "Muta'alim" متَعالِم i.e a false claimaint of Religious Knowledge [Mu'jam Lughah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'asirah (2/1541/3446), wa Mu'jam al-Sawab al-Lughawi (1/239), wa al-Mu'jam al-Wasit (2/624), wa Mu'jam al-Ghani al-Zahir: "Ta'alum"]. These are individuals who appear in Islamic garb, speak eloquently, and quote Qur'anic verses and hadith numbers (without memorizing the actual texts), portraying themselves as scholars. However, they possess no Certification/ authorization, no scholarly background, and no connection to seeking knowledge according to the methodology of the as-Salaf us-Salih (Pious Predecessors i.e. the first three generations after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ). These "Brothers" cause the greatest harm in society because they spread ignorance in the name of knowledge. Allah said:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا﴾ [الإسراء ٣٦]

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned." [Al-Israa' 17:36]

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajr al-Asqalaani said: "When a man speaks about a field not his own, he produces bizarre results." [Fath al-Baari 3/584]. Although This disease of Feigning knowledge has existed throughout the ages. But in modern times — with the expansion of science and technology and the availability of information — it has intensified due to materialism, love of fame, ostentation, and worldly gains.

Giving Da'wah in Islam Requires Conditions and Qualifications

Calling to Allah, advising, commanding good, and forbidding evil are from the obligations of the religion. However, Islam has set clear principles, etiquette, and conditions for daʿwah, all of which are found in the Qurʾaan and Sunnah. Allah says:

﴿قُلْ هَٰذِهِۦ سَبِيلِىٓ أَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا۠ وَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَنِى ۖ وَسُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ [يوسف ١٠٨]

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me. And exalted is Allāh; and I am not of those who associate others with Him." [Yusuf 12:108]

﴿ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ ۖ وَجَٰدِلْهُم بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ﴾ الآية [النحل ١٢٥]

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided. [an-Nahl 16:125]

So, the da'ee must have: Firm knowledge and clarity of methodology, Understanding and wisdom (fiqh), Proper skills in debate and advice, Insight and basirah in religion. Without this, one cannot succeed in calling to Allah. It is therefore imperative for anyone who wants to become a da'ee to: First seek knowledge; Learn the etiquette and rulings of daʿwah; Only then enter this noble field.

But sadly, in every era — even among the righteous predecessors — there have been people who violated this path, relying on self-study and superficial reading, entering the field of daʿwah and issuing Fatawa without knowledge. This is precisely what the Prophet ﷺ warned us of: Narrated Abdullah bin Amr bin al-Aas: I heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ saying, "Allah does not take away the knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious learned men till when none of the (religious learned men) remains, people will take as their leaders ignorant persons who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So they will go astray and will lead the people astray." [Sahih al-Bukhari 100]. Such people should have studied under upright scholars upon the methodology of the Salaf, acquired fiqh in din, and then entered the field of daʿwah only with the consultation of those very scholars. Allah says:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾ [التوبة ١٢١-١٢٢]

And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn [i.e., advise] their people when they return to them that they might be cautious. [Al-Tawbah 9:122]

So, Allah commands "at-Tafaqquh" (understanding) in din before engaging in daʿwah. For daʿwah without knowledge causes more corruption than rectification. It is among the worst of evils, being "speaking about Allah without knowledge", which Allah mentions as worse than shirk:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَٰحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَن تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَن تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الأعراف ٣٣]

Say, "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities – what is apparent of them and what is concealed – and sin, and oppression without right, and that you associate with Allaah that for which He has not sent down authority, and that you say about Allaah that which you do not know." [Al-A'raaf 7:33]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim rh stated in multiple places in his book Madarij al-Saalikin that speaking about Allah without knowledge is worse than shirk (polytheism), because while a mushrik (Polythiest) associates partners with Allah in worship and the ignorant mufti makes himself partner in legislation!

1. Some Clear Signs of "Brothers":

• Entering the Field of teaching or issuing fatwaa (Islamic Verdict/ Ruling) without proper qualifications: Al-Badr ibn Jama'ah rh said in his book Tadhkirat al-Saami' wa al-Mutakallim fi Adab al-Aalim wa al-Mut'allim (p. 87): Imam ash-Shafiʿi said: "Whoever tries to acquire fiqh solely through books wastes the rulings." And others said: "One of the greatest trials is "Making Books your Shaikh"— i.e., one who learns only from books. And Ibn Abd al-Barr said: "Whoever pretends to have something he does not possess, the trials of testing will expose him." [Jamii Bayaan al-Ilm wa Fadlihi (1/577)]. And this is the very reason why Abu al-Zinad rh narrates as Imam Muslim reported in the introduction to his Sahih [Sahih Muslim, Muqaddimah (1/15)]: "I met one hundred people in Madinah, all of whom were trustworthy, but hadith was not taken from them. It used to be said: They are not from its people (i.e., not qualified to narrate)." And Ibn Hazm warned: "The worst calamity upon knowledge and its people is intruders who are not from among them. They are ignorant, but they think they are learned. They spread corruption, thinking they are reforming." [al-Akhlaq wa as-Siyar, p. 23]

•Craving fame and followers: Sufyan al-Thawri said: "When too many sailors take over, the ship sinks." [Narrated by al-Ramahurmuzi in al-Muhaddith al-Fasil bayna al-Rawi wa al-Waaʿi] And Shuʿbah ibn al-Hajjaaj narrated from Abd Allaah ibn Awn: "Do you know what makes people lie in hadith? They want to be honored by it." [Al Ilal wa Ma'rifat al Rijal by Imam Ahmad no.2934]

•Envy of true scholars and attacking them This was illustrated by al-Abaar's (a classical scholar) encounter with a man with a shaved moustache who was criticizing great muhaddithin while posing with piles of books — a scene documented in al-Kifaayah fi ʿIlm al-Riwaayah by al-Khaṭib al-Baghdaadi Page No. 4-5.

•Writing books before attaining scholarly maturity, and making their personalities central in scholarly writings: Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim describes them in al-Kaafiyah al-Shaafiyah (al-Nuniyyah pg.361): "This – and indeed, I am still being tested by a group… all of them harboring rancor in their hearts – harsh, coarse, ignorant, falsely claiming to have knowledge… wearing oversized turbans, with wide sleeves, pompous in speech, bloated in ignorance… bald-headed and devoid of true understanding – bankrupt in knowledge… a confused mixture of delusion and incoherent rambling. He complains to Allah of rights as if oppressed – yet his ignorance is like the ailments of bodies at the hands of an ignorant pseudo-doctor – one who issues fataawaa for the masses while blaming it all upon the Qadr (decree) of the Most Merciful."

2. Harms Caused by "Brothers":

• Misguiding the masses and corrupting Aqidah: They interpret Qur'an and Sunnah based on their intellect without grounding in Salafi principles, unknowingly adopting

Muʿtazili reasoning. Since they wear the dress of scholarship, people accept their opinions, resulting in major corruption in belief and methodology. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah does not take knowledge by snatching it from the hearts of people, but He takes it away by the death of scholars. When no scholar remains, people will appoint ignorant ones as leaders. They will be asked and will give fataawaa without knowledge. They will go astray and lead others astray." [al-Bukhaari] In our time, the head of the modern-day "brother" movement is known for spreading major mistakes in Aqidah and manhaj.

•Disrespecting and downplaying real scholars: When every unqualified person speaks in din, the laypeople cannot distinguish between real scholars and impostors. Some people get so used to their casual, liberal interpretations, citing only verse numbers or scientific spins on religious texts, that they begin to see real scholars as "dry" and outdated. Ibn Masʿud said: "You live in a time where scholars are many and speakers are few... but a time will come where speakers will be many and true scholars will be few." [Adab al-Mufrad by al-Bukhari no.789]

•Spreading innovation and misguidance: These "Brothers" invent religious opinions on the spot, issuing fatwas without foundation. This leads to widespread innovation (bidAh) and the disappearance of Sunnah. Indeed, from the people of Nuh until today, shirk, kufr, and bidAh arose due to false interpretations by pretenders to knowledge.

•Distorting the true image of Islam: They turn Islam into a stage performance driven by emotion, appearance, and trends. People start judging the din by delivery style, and forget its substance. The true beauty of Islam fades when people abandon real scholars and cling to these personalities. If books alone were sufficient, Allah would not have sent messengers.

3. Precautionary Measures and Remedies:

• Only take knowledge from upright scholars upon the methodology of the Salaf: Ibn Sirin said: "This knowledge is religion, so be careful whom you take your religion from." [Sahih Muslim, Muqaddimah]. And Ibn al-Arif al-Ṣanhaaji said: "Whoever does not sit with scholars to learn the foundations of knowledge, then his certainty in difficulties will only be assumptions." Abu Hayyaan used to repeat: "If you seek knowledge without a Shaykh, you will stray from the straight path." [Hilyat Ṭaalib al-ʿIlm by 'Allamah Bakr ibn Abd Allaah Abu Zayd].

•Study in a gradual, structured way under scholars upon the manhaj of the Salaf: Abdullah ibn Abbas says explaining the term "al-Rabbaani" , it means: "He who nurtures people with small knowledge before giving them large matters." [al-Bukhari 1:37]. And Al-Zuhri said: "Do not take knowledge all at once. Whoever tries to gather it all at once will lose it all at once. Rather, learn bit by bit with the passing of days and nights." In

another report: “Whoever seeks knowledge all at once will be deprived of all of it. Knowledge is acquired hadith by hadith.”

• Show extreme caution in giving fatwaa; if you don’t know, say ‘Laa Adri’ (I don’t know): Al-Shaʿbi was once told: “You are often asked questions, and you respond with ‘I don’t know’?” He replied: “The closest angels to Allah were asked about what they didn’t know, and they didn’t shy away from saying: ‘We have no knowledge except what You taught us.’” [al-Baqarah 2:32]. And it is reported in ‘Ataa ibn Abi Rabaah’s biography that he used to say:“ ‘I don’t know’ is half of knowledge.” [Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (5/85)].

May Allah grant us sound knowledge and protect us from the fitnah of “Brothers”. Amin.

Student: Sayed Faraaz Ahmed Khudbuddin

Class: IX الاول من الثانوية ، الجامعة الاسلامية نورباغ، كوسه، ممبرا